*In their study of students’ reasons for online plagiarism, Comas-Forgas and Sureda-Negre (2010) found that some students say it “is easier, simpler and more comfortable than doing the work yourself” (p. 223). Can you suggest arguments that would help persuade students that online plagiarism, while easy and quick, is not in their best interests?*

Technology has made it easy for students to find work and pass it off as their own. With so much available on the internet students find this tempting. The suggestion has in fact been made that students perceive online plagiarism offences as being significantly less dishonest than similar offences using printed sources (Baruchson-Arbib and Yaari 2004).

So how do we convince students not to plagiarize?

As educators our primary role in the classroom is to teach our students. If we want students to really understand plagiarism, and therefore avoid it, we must first teach them about it. Soto, Anand, and McGee (2004) suggest that many students are committing plagiarism as they don’t fully understand what constitutes plagiarism. Recent case study research provides support for the effectiveness of incorporating plagiarism instruction into individual courses. Soto, Anand, and McGee (2004) found that students who received no explicit plagiarism instruction plagiarized twice as often as those who participated in active instructional activities such as class discussions and definitions of plagiarism, review of Turnitin.com, plagiarism reports, and exercises requiring students to identify instances of plagiarism in example essays. If we teach our students what plagiarism is, we hopefully teach them not to do it.

Once we have taught students what plagiarism is, we must also teach them why it is academically, morally and ethically wrong. Students must understand that when they commit plagiarism they are denying themselves the opportunity to learn and acquire skills which they may need in the future. Also if students do not submit their own work they cannot receive constructive criticism on how to improve their work. Jenkins (2012) states: “Plagiarism ultimately prevents you from acquiring the writing skills you’re going to need-and are expected to have-as college graduates in the work force.”

We must also remind students that plagiarism is essentially lying and stealing. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines plagiarism as: “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own**:** use (another's production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft**:** present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.”

Finally plagiarism is disrespectful to teachers, and to other students who have actually done their work. As educators, part of our role in the classroom is to create well-rounded citizens. The Ontario Liberal Plan for Education (2003) states: “Education is about more than reading, writing and creating good workers. We believe excellent public education should also develop good, well-rounded citizens. Character education is about schools reinforcing values shared by the school community; values such as respect, honesty, responsibility and fairness.” By teaching students that plagiarism is disrespectful and dishonest we are teaching them why they should not do it, while at the same time we are encouraging them to be good citizens.

In conclusion, if students truly understand what plagiarism is, and why it is wrong and disrespectful, hopefully they will realize it is not in their best interests.

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